

A New Life Burdened With Regrets

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Summary: Shay wanted to ensure that the Manuscript would never reach their hands again. And he is successful... In a peculiar way. Far from their reach and yet far from his world, Shay tries to adapt to his new life in a world full of manipulators of elements and adventures on a different level. All because of a stupid piece of jewelry.

1. Chapter 1

"I will not let you run away."

Kesegowasee's threat unfazed Shay Patrick Cormac as he jumps out of ground level and runs up a trunk conveniently chopped down to provide a way up to the tree branches. The snow storm picks up without warning and Shay takes a moment to hold on to a branch. He can't turn back, especially now that they decided to downright bombard the forest. The rock blockade, originally intended to cut out his escape, had in a small way delayed reinforcements and trapped them with the mortar projectiles, yet such an advantage would be short lived.

They are Assassins, trained to find a way around messes regardless of the dreadful situations or the obstacles in their path. And besides, the mortars had ceased roaring.

The storm subsides for the time being and Shay wastes no time in making use of that. He hops from branch to branch while retaining the proper balance to not lose speed as well as not fall over. A musket bullet blurs past him and Shay halts in a branch disoriented. In a feat of luck (created by him obviously) he manages to keep still and not fall down to the vegetation. Recovered from the shock, he draws one of his flintlocks, points it to the lookout on his left and fires. He didn't kill him since that went against his nature; he only incapacitated him with a shot to the leg. He tosses the pistol to the river running some meters away from him and continues.

"Resistance is not of your best interest. You'd do best in giving up now!"

"_I have to move_", Shay hisses mentally.

Bullets and rocks fly high to hit him, few hitting him but fazing him. Sick of the persistent bastards, Shay closes in on a lookout post where a stationed sniper aimed at his chest with a smirk. He devises a plan at the speed of sound. He lands a tree branch away from the sniper and jumps to the right and out of the man's sights. A wasted bullet flies out of the musket and Shay, not sparing a smirk to the enraged lookout, pushes him out of the post while planting a smoke bomb, with the lit removed and on countdown to explosion, on the man's belt.

When the man lands on the snow and causes some men to slow down and go around him, the smoke bomb blows up, covering the ground with a large and high thick smoke cloud. Satisfied, Shay proceeds through another network of branches.

People behind him on the branches gradually catch up with him, Kesegowasee leading them, so Shay appreciates that the aerial getaway ends with a thinner branch of a fir. He hops to that branch and, in a combination of landing and leap movements, he performs the regular leap of faith he had been taught to use.

"_Keep the arms stretched, flip in the air to face the ground with your back and close your eyes. If done correctly, the danger is minimal and you'll feel free._", Achilles' advices echoed in his mind.

"_I've got moves you've never seen me use, Shay. But continue to practice and you'll get there_", Liam's face lit up in a grin in his mind.

"_And you're mistaken if any training will make you a proper Assassin. Do you even know what that means?_", Shay visualized Chevalier scowling him prior to captaining _The Morrigan_.

Down below a large amount of leafs under a layer of snow softened the impact and Shay gains control of his memories. He barges out of the landing area and cuts through the snow to the left. The screams of authority fly with the wind but not the semi-muffled sounds of runners behind him. He throws a quick glance to his back. The brown and orange of their clothes was unmistakably coming closer to him. He grunted and kicked his way out of the gradually thinner layer of snow.

"Stop Cormac!"

"What are you doing Shay?", a particular feminine voice demanded.

Shay ignored the question from Hope, one of his closest friends, and kicks one last time to make way. His boots start to hit more stable ground and he breaks into a sprint, unsure of where to go next.

"_Get to the cliff_", Shay screams inwardly.

And he did, hoping that they'd stop their pursuit when he'd be out of their hands and guns' reach. He sees movement to his right side and rolls over a human projectile of orange and brown. Not losing momentum he resumes the sprint, resisting the urge to smirk at his attacker's curse to focus on his destination. Up, up, to the end, he slows down and stops in two calculated steps nearly in the edge of the cliff, close to be able to dive and to look at its bottom. He bites his lips defeated. The cliff was high, maybe too high for someone to survive the fall and, if by chance he did, the sharp rocks would lower his survival chances to zero.

He was trapped between two monsters. Which was the lesser of the two evils?

The pursuers catch up with Shay, panting loudly from the chase. He recognizes the clinging of Chevalier's favorite sword sheathed on his hip, the bull like grunts of Kesegowasee, and the cocking of the hammer of a flintlock.

"That's enough!"

Liam, Hope, Chevalier, Kesegowasee and if he wasn't imagining wrong, Achilles too, leading the pursuit. They had all come to stop the traitor to the Brotherhood from stealing the Manuscript and flee with it. All his comrades with the same objective.

Shay lowers his white hood. In his perspective it would be useless and a shame to wear it any longer. He'd die that night, looking or not like an Assassin, and he'd rather die not looking like one. He was a mass murderer of almost an entire city's populace, the executioner of thousands of men, women and children in Lisbon, and he had done all that under the Brotherhood's misled orders. Even touching that Apple of Eden—no, not an Apple, rather, a structure that held the world together—Even touching that darn thing had been a mistake. And with millions of deaths came the realization that it took a city to glance at a mirror and see a killer of British soldiers doing their duties and of other people, who probably didn't deserve their fate and would do good to humanity. Most Templars, sure, but men with lives and loved ones all the same.

He had wanted to stop that from happening to another city, he had had to make amends as he had told Achilles moments ago. But what had they done to his warning? Discarded, assumed that it had come from a broken man who had failed a complex task for his inexperience on the job!

Achilles might be the Mentor, his family might be dead and he might have left scarred, but Liam had fooled himself for thinking he'd leave the matter unattended—There was no excuse for such a level of madness.

Shay turns around to face them. Chevalier with a hand on the pistol in case of need, Kesegowasee gripping the axe's handle, Achilles piercing Shay's soul with his authoritative look. Liam pointing the flintlock to Shay's head with a mask of coldness, Hope next to Achilles looking uneasy. Probably the whole rest of the Brotherhood behind them, they were too many to count and give importance.

They all had their hoods up or a trait tricorne or broad hat on.

United by a Brotherhood that shed blood with earthquakes and would continue to do so. It was a shame indeed for Shay.

"Give back the Manuscript Shay.", Hope begs. "Iâ€™m sure Achillesâ€|"

Would spare him? Make it quick? Oh no. Shay knew better than that.

"I cannot.", he refuses in his ruffed voice. "I will not let this happen again! All those souls lostâ€|"

His eyes relive the scenes he came across while fleeing the shaking city: Crumbling buildings crushing people, the fires that had raged the streets, the cracked and leveled streets lifting the city like a balance. But the people screaming in Portuguese for their families or salvation, running around for protection, was the rotten cherry in the cake. He had ruined their lives. Nothing would change that and wash the blood on his hands.

"â€| one more hardly matters.", the grief keeps his voice loud enough to be hearable.

He spares Liam a look. His choice was made. The lesser of two evils awaited him a dive away and only Liam had the power to stop him.

"_Leave me be", _He pleads with his look.

Heâ€™d miss him above all else. His best friend, often the older brother figure, his first mate in every area and the member he trusted more in the Brotherhood. Not many people had understood Shay throughout his life like Liam or given him something to live for.

Shay inhales deeply and imperceptibly, swings an arm back to make sure the book is safe on his clothes and turns around. He takes a step forward and faces his fate. He had always been a fighter and he wasnâ€™t going to stop now.

"Shay!", Liam calls out.

"_No, Liam"_ , Shay wants to sigh.

He steps forward again and leans forward to dive. Then thereâ€™s the sound of a flintlock firing and the unbearable pain of a bullet lodging itself on the left superior side of his back. Shay can only grunt and narrow his eyes, unable to stop the force of the bullet from throwing him head on off the cliff. Instant surprise fades to be replaced with the feeling of sadness and betrayal for Liamâ€™s action.

"_Business is business, Shay. Never forget that!", _Liam had stated once on a mission on Halifax.

Heâ€™s thankful for falling unconscious before the landing.

* * *

><p>He flips twice in the air and slams in the water on his belly.

Immobile from passing out, he floats away in the icy waters, gradually further away from the cliff and the men and woman watching him go. Achilles doesn't waste time in ordering everyone to get to a rowboat and get Shay's body back. Most scatter in multiple directions to get to the dock, others take a while longer to watch Shay drift away, like a sad Liam and Hope, grieving for the death of his friend.<p>

"I'm killing Chevalier for this.", Liam mutters. He wasn't thinking straight, but who cared? Shay had died, a traitor, but still his friend.

"Don't Liam. Forget it, let's just go.", Hope has him think of the orders. "Maybe he's just unconscious and we can save him."

Liam isn't convinced at all. That thin hope however gets him dragging his feet to the dock with Hope at his side pushing him slightly.

If they had stayed a while longer, they would have seen a shiny object floating closer to Shay. It's a necklace, with a golden string and a big hexagonal crystal medal depicting a man offering something to the sun. The closer it gets to Shay, the more the Box, locked in a cabinet in Achilles' room, glows and booms. The medal brushes Shay's ear and the Box activates, sending a massive blue shockwave that shatters every window of the Manor, shakes _The Morrigan_ and _The Gerfaut_ anchored in the dock, creates small waves that hit the rowboats and some of the rowing crew, blows the snow off the trees and swallows Shay out of the water and out of presence, along with the necklace.

The nervousness is general in the five rowboats, where the men exchange astonished exclamations. Achilles, trying to calm the nerves of his men, notices that the upper floor of the Manor had been set ablaze and the flames threatening to expand to the lower floor.

"Continue with the search! We must find the Manuscript!", he spots Liam and Hope running to the Manor, buckets in their hands. "Take me back ashore, now!"

The rowers of the rowboat in question turn the boat around and heads back to shore.

The rest of the next half hour is spent containing the fire and then erasing it. Achilles' room had been the origin point of the fire, more specifically the blown up cabinet with the Box in it, leaving the division with burning furniture and destroyed maps, charts and portraits. The rest of the upper floor was dealt with accordingly and eventually the fires died.

The Box had been retrieved; however, it's state had dropped an enormous weight on Achilles' heart. Besides partially blown up, lightning occasionally cracked there and there and shocked whoever held it, in simple words, unusable. Achilles' hadn't even started swearing to the heavens when the research groups returned and informed that Shay and the Manuscript had vanished and that, with the snow storm picking up once more, they wouldn't find anything that night.

Achilles takes in the reports in silence and then he looks up to the moon.

"_You did it Shay. I hope you're happy now", He scraps his teeth in anger.

* * *

><p>The void of feeling is replaced with the sense of warm air and the comfort of a mattress on top of him. He has soft sheets over him, leaving his face uncovered. His eyelids press against each other, with the burden of many hours of rest weighting on them.<p>

"_Why can't anything go like planned?", the pained Shay grunts to himself.

He refuses to open his eyes yet. Maybe he'll die later if he waits long enough. Unlikely, he has to concede sadly, when he realizes his chest and back were bandaged and hence, treated. Things hadn't gone according to what Shay had planned and now he'd live with that failure for the rest of his life.

What to do next? Keep a low profile and leave the colonies for sure, but where to then? His whole life had been on the colonies and the North Atlantic seas. He didn't know London or what to do there. His French was miserable (on that he agreed with Chevalier), like his Spanish, therefore he could exclude France and Spain. As for Portugal, well

Shay's left with two choices: Either go to London and make a living by sailing on one of the Commercial Companies, a good reasonable life if he kept a low profile from the Templars controlling them, or sail to Lisbon and offer his services to help the city back up. The latter felt way more reassuring even if it was the capital of Templar operations in Portugal.

But first where was he?

Shay opens his eyes and sees a room different from the ones he had been before. Throwing the sheets to his right, he leaves the bed and evaluates his body's condition. The wound beneath the bandages ached and a rib had broken on his left side, courtesy of a rock no doubt, but he could walk. Well, limp actually. He limped to the window to see the outside and was impressed to find only the vast ocean and the rocks below.

"_I'm in an island...Doesn't bring any light on me. I know every island from the Manor to Fogo and I've never come here before", Shay compares his geographical knowledge with the location and the surroundings.

In doing so he flexed his left arm and rolled his shoulder tensely, flaring up the pain on his left side. Shay winces faintly and bites his lower lip.

"Ah, you've woken up.", a male voice, along with the creaking of the door, startles Shay.

He turns around so quickly that the pain grows stronger and he nearly collapses to his knees. Hurried steps towards him echoed in the room

and seconds later, a pair of hands steadies him. Straightening up, he studies the man's features: Middle-aged if not fifty, bald, with a blue tattoo of an arrow going from the back of the head to the forehead, pointy black beard and mustache around the chin, gray eyes with a hint of blue, and an attire consisting in a yellow shirt and pants and a red cape large enough for his width and big enough to touch the floor.

"_Don't tell me I washed ashore in a monk community!_", Shay exclaims post-analysis. One thing he had learned painfully is that religious communities were extremely boring to stay in.

"Go easy, young man. You've been ill for weeks now and it's natural that you're not fully recovered.", the monk recommends whilst leading him back to the bed.

"W-where am I?", Shay asks through a sharp breath. He sits in the bed as the man walks backwards to give him space.

"You're in the Air Temple Island, home of the winged ring tail lemurs and the sky bisons. I'm Tenzin and I reside here with my family.", the man explained, hiding his hands in the large sleeves of his shirt.

"My name is Shay Patrick Cormac.", Shay introduced himself holding out a hand. "Thank you. For saving my life, I mean."

"Pardon me, but did you say winged ring tail lemurs and sky what?", Shay repeats as Tenzin shakes the offered hand.

"Sky Bisons and yes I did say winged ring tail lemurs.", Tenzin confirmed, not holding back the pride. "It's the only place where you can find them."

Shay stares blankly at Tenzin.

"Those are animals, right?", he blinks.

Tenzin's eyebrows shoot up.

"Come now, surely you have heard of them.", he frowns.

"I haven't sir. Might be animals that inhabit your island only and I've never been here before. That reminds me", Shay tries to get up but Tenzin doesn't allow that. "is this in River Valley? Where's the nearest settlement?"

Now it was Tenzin's turn to look blankly at him.

"Are you jesting me?", He asks serious.

"No sir, I'm not. Although judging by your reaction I know I'm not.", Shay sighs.

A small uncomfortable silence falls between the two.

"So can you tell me more about this place?", Shay politely asks, half annoyed for being taken as a fool.

Tenzin agrees but requests Shay to wait for him while he'd find him

suitable clothes. He leaves the room, non-repressed confusion twisted in his features, unnoticed by the more puzzled Shay. Left to wander the bedroom and face his inner conflicts, Shay gives it a complete search. He walks into a white adjacent room and finds it oddly weird, with the exception of the mirror on the wall.

Shay looks at himself in the mirror. His appearance had suffered a big change since the last time he saw himself on the mirror. His normally long black hair had been cut and it was now only his pinky's size; a cut near the chin had been stitched; the beard, that he liked to keep around his chin, had grown to cover his jaw in totality; checking his fingernails, he finds them cut; and most noticeable of all, he had a scar.

Every Assassin and smuggler doing business by Davenport Manor took pride in brandishing his or her scars to others just to show off. Acquiring a scar, especially like his own now, was considered respectful, the mark of a warrior and a challenge. Shay's scar started by the right eyebrow, continued down over the right eye and stopped some inches away from it. He runs his fingers along the scar, disbelieving. A mental scar and a physical one to mark his failure, just what he needed. A growling sigh escapes his throat when he retreats his hands and grips the basin. An idea gains form in his brain and he latches on to it immediately. He looks at the basin and picks up a razor-blade. Twirling it in his hands to check its condition, he begins to shave the beard in steady moves, starting with his face and then moving to the neck.

When he concludes and the basin is filled with facial hairs, he takes in the fact that he looks like a new person and that the Shay persona that had attempted to commit suicide in Davenport had disappeared. And it sure does not look bad on him as well.

"Shay, are you in the bathroom?"

Tenzin.

"Just a moment.", Shay cleans his neck of any facial hair left and walks out of the bathroom.

He finds Tenzin by the door with a folded set of clothes on his hands and the air rifle wrapped in a white blanket on top of them.

"Unfortunately your clothes were torn and bloodstained. Besides Pema and Acolytes' best efforts they could not remove them or stitch them up. Yet, my wife has a good eye for sizes so I believe these should fit you nicely. Try them on.", Tenzin hands over the clothes to Shay and keeps the air rifle with him.

Retreating once more to the bathroom, Shay unfolds the clothes and looks separately at each one of them. There was a beige shirt of foreign design, a brown jacket with buttons, a high collar and pockets on the bottom, in each side, grey pants accompanied with the belt of his Assassin outfit and fingerless gloves. Shay liked that last detail.

"Did I have a book with me?", Shay asks as he picks up the shirt. It's about time he worried with his belongings.

"Yes, you did. I've kept it in my study to hand it to you. Your weapons were delivered to the Police for protection but we've kept your strange long object.", Tenzin answers.

Shay peeks out of the bathroom.

"You gave my weapons to your Police?!"

"We didn't know if you were a troublemaker or if you carried them for safety. We played safe. In time I will return them to you, rest assured.", Tenzin assures. He thought he noticed Shay's eyes darken at the response but waves it off.

"Fine. Do rest assured, I don't want any trouble with you or your family.", Shay puts on the pants and ties them with the belt. "For how long have I been under your care?"

"Today makes two months since you washed ashore and my children found you. You were burning up and evidently in need of medical care.", Tenzin explains, looking at the trigger of the air rifle. "We treated your wound but you have remained unconscious until now."

"I can't thank you enough, sir.", Shay thanks while limping out of the bathroom.

"Much better than when we found you.", Tenzin commends looking Shay up and down.

Shay smiles faintly at the complement. His eyes drift to the air rifle in his caretaker's hands.

"If I may, sir?", Shay asks nodding to the air rifle. Tenzin hands the rifle to Shay by holding it by the reloading mechanism. "This is an air rifle. Unlike the regular muskets the British and French use, this one makes no sound and fires darts instead of bullets."

Shay flips the rifle down to see if a dart would fall out. It didn't and so Shay feels like he can't demonstrate much without one.

"Who are the British and the French? What's a musket? How did you get the scar? What's your name?"

The voice surprises Shay again and launched another round of pain in his side. He looks at the source of the voice, a small boy smiling widely at him and wearing a super smaller size of Tenzin's attire. His hair was shaven and his eyes were paler than Tenzin's, leaving no doubt that the kid was Tenzin's son.

"Meelo, go back to your bedroom please.", Tenzin scolds the boy.

"Sorry daddy, I heard you going to see the pirate and I wanted to meet him.", the boy, Meelo, has his smile grow wider. "What's your name? Where do you come from?"

Shay takes a second to keep all the toddler's questions in his mind.

"My name's Shay Patrick Cormac and I'm from New York."

Meelo snorts.

"Your name is weird, Shay.", he comments.

"Is that soâ€|? Meelo, right?", the boy nods. "Yours is weird too now that I think about it." Shay snorts at the boy, who sticks out his tongue to Shay after that. "Anyway, Iâ€™m sorry to tell you but Iâ€™m not a pirate. Iâ€™m aâ€|", he stops to think of a good word to describe himself. "Iâ€™m a privateer."

"â€|Are you sure youâ€™re not a pirate?", Meelo inquires.

"Iâ€™m privateer.", Shay corrects.

"But you walk around with a sword and a dagger, you have, wait, had a black beard and talk funny! You have to be a pirate!", Meelo pouts crestfallen.

Shay canâ€™t help but laugh. He kneels to face the boy in a position that doesnâ€™t sparkle any more pain.

"Aye, I do talk funny, blame it on my father. I might not be a pirate, but I do sail around in a big ship, looting the Britishâ€™s vessels until theyâ€™re dry.", Shay rests a hand on Meeloâ€™s shoulder. "My Morrigan is the best Bret-O-War you can find in the Colonies, scoutâ€™s honor!"

The curious goofy expression returns to Meeloâ€™s face. "Can I try your thing?", Meelo reaches out for the rifle but Shay draws it away.

"Maybe later, lad.", Shay playfully winks at the boy.

Shayâ€™s stomach chooses the occasion to rumble loudly.

"Umâ€| can I have something to eat?", he asks embarrassed to Tenzin.

"Come with me. Pema is sleeping with the kids and they should only come down later."

Shay rises and follows Tenzin to the kitchen located floors below the current one. Meelo accompanies them by asking a multitude of questions to Shay, to which the latter tries to answer as evasively as possible. Some catch his attention, like "Are you a firebender?" and "Youâ€™re a non-bender?". He is surprised to know that the kid has never heard of New York or even places like Halifax or Alabama, only of "Republic City", wherever the hell that place was, and that he didnâ€™t know the Seven Years War had been going on. Even Tenzin joined the conversation at that point to hear more about it. Thinking they lived in an isolated community that by some miracle hadnâ€™t had outside contact for God knows how many years, Shayâ€™s feeling of misplacement increased. When they reached the kitchen, he asked for Meelo to find him a map and the boy ran off through the same way they entered.

Tenzin waits until Meelo is out of hearing range to openly express his opinion:

"Iâ€™ll be honest with you, Shay. You tell some stories that Iâ€™ve

never heard one tell and the fact that you were armed with rudimentary weapons like those makes me uneasy about your mental condition."

"Iâ'm not mad or lying if thatâ's whatâ's on your mind.", Shay freezes and calmly counters. "Iâ'm speaking the truth even if you donâ't believe me."

"In that case answer me this question: How did you come by this?"

Tenzinâ's right hand goes to a pocket in the pants and removes a crystal necklace with a golden string. Shay cocks his head to his side, unrecognizing the thing.

"I donâ't know what that is, sir. All I remember is being shot at and falling off a cliff. Could have come in contact with the thing while Iâ€|"

Shayâ's justification halts as his brain thinks more clearly. Davenport manor was far from River Valley, so there had been no way he could have ended up there, with or without snow storm. His argument is backed up by the fact that he would have had to be found by someone sailing in the night and brought him there, or otherwise he would have never survived the weather and/or the Assassins.

"You said you found me washed ashore. Are you sure no one brought me to your care?", Shay asks suspiciously.

"No, like I said, my children found you. There was no one with you and no identification. Now back to my question. How did you come about this?", Tenzin brings the conversation back on the original track.

"Iâ've never seen that necklace before.", Shay repeats firmly, clearly annoyed.

Tenzin stares at him a bit longer before putting the necklace back in his pocket.

"This is the Spirit of Peace, an artifact from the time of Fire Lord Sozin that was recently stolen from the Museum. The thieves were on the run for a week until they were caught. Yet on the interrogatory they neither gave the whereabouts of the necklace nor which man hid it."

"And because you found me with it, you have reasons to suspect I had something to do with the theft.", Shay concludes sitting on the chair. "How can I clear my name?"

"For now youâ'll rest here until your condition has improved. When I deem you up to it, weâ'll find Lin Beifong, the Chief of Police, and youâ'll give your accounts on the matter.", Tenzin prepares a cup with cereals, fetches a spoon and puts them on the table., "Now eat."

"_Escaping death to face another problem. Way to go, asshole_", Shay grumbles.

Shay takes the spoon and tastes the breakfast. He likes it and, in

hungry spoonfuls, he devours the cereals, drinking the milk when he's finished. Tenzin makes him company while eating his own breakfast, often asking about Shay's life. Shay, who had accepted that he'd have to tell the truth sooner or later, answered with a detailed tale of his life.

"And those cities, Haiti and Lisbon, are destroyed because your former colleagues don't know what they are doing with those artifacts?", Tenzin leans forward to better hear Shay's narration as he tells of the memorable 1st of November of 1755.

"Aye. I tried to make them see reason but they didn't listen. Achilles might be the Mentor and his family might have died, but such level of madness was inexcusable. I had to do something.", Shay rubs his eyelids tiredly.

"The Assassins and Templars you speak of seem to be a danger to the populace. I shall inform Lin to keep an eye out for them.", Tenzin meditates over the reports.

"It takes more than just keeping an eye out, frankly. Assassins, like me - like I was, are trained to hide in plain sight and to never compromise the Brotherhood. Even if you can catch one, he'd rather be made a martyr than give away his secrets.", Shay enumerates the hard chances of finding one. "As for the Templars, those bastards are highly influent people, the sort you'd never think are involved in those businesses."

"Shay! I have the map!"

Meelo enters the kitchen at full speed with a rolled map on his hands and slides to a stop in front of Shay. Shay took the map in his hands as Tenzin told Meelo not to scream when his mother and siblings were sleeping. Unrolling it, Shay runs his eyes over it, immediately preoccupation seeping into them.

"Meelo, are you sure you brought me the right map?", he asks nervously without looking at the boy.

"Yep, it's daddy's special one.", Meelo confirms while sitting on a chair himself.

Shay swallows saliva, flabbergasted. The map didn't have neither the continents he knew, nor the known symbols and names he had been used to work with. No Americas, no Europe, no Asia, no Africa, just a huge island painted in white, a set of volcanic islands to the left painted in red, an island in light blue on the top of the map and another on the opposite side of a darker blue, a thick lane by the north coast of the white island in dark gray and scattered mountainous mini-islands. He tries to read the huge characters that pinpoint the islands' names but he can't, as they are in a different language.

"I can't read anything in here. Would you mind translating these, please?", Shay requested Tenzin offering the map.

"You can't read?", Meelo gasps with wide eyes.

"Well, I can, just not this language. Is it Chinese?", Shay takes a guess.

Tenzin nods and instead of taking the map, he goes around the table to be with Shay and Meelo.

"These are the Bending Countries and they consist on the North and South Poles, the Fire Nation and the Earth Kingdom. Then there is the United Republic of Nations", Tenzin points to each country on the map. "Currently we are here, near its capital, Republic City. Where in this map can we find Lisbon and Haiti?"

"That's just it. They're not here. This map is different from mine!", Shay exclaims.

"What do you mean?", Tenzin cocks an eyebrow. "You're not making sense now."

"Hang on. Have you kept my pouches?", Shay questions. Tenzin confirms. "Take me to them, please."

The adults and Meelo leave the kitchen, go up a flight of stairs, and enter a corridor. Walking (limping in Shay's case) some meters ahead, they enter the fourth door to the left, to a room that Shay can only presume to be Tenzin's study. He watches silently as Tenzin opens a drawer on a writing desk and removes his leather belt. Shay had crafted it on his way to Lisbon to spend the time while not sailing the ship himself, with the intention of having as much tools at his disposal as he could. It has four pouches: one for the Rope Darts, two for the ammunition and one where he kept the notes of assignments or a spare map for emergency. Like now for example.

"Open the one to the right.", Shay instructs.

Following the command, Tenzin takes out a yellow colored paper, folded to create a square the size of his hand, and as he unfolds it, he doesn't keep the curiosity of his face.

"Now let's see€| Shay, was it you who drew this?", Tenzin looks at the map.

"I bought that map on New York on a brief stop there. As you can see it's very different from yours.", Shay clarifies, running a hand on his hair. "Don't take this the wrong way, but have you had any outside contact over the years?"

Tenzin completely ignores him. He removes the same necklace out of the same pocket, mumbles incoherent words incredulously with his back turned to Shay and then he brings Shay closer to him by the elbow.

"I may know how you came here."

"Do tell.", Shay's own inquisitiveness peeks.

"The Spirit of Peace, while a beautiful piece of the time of the Fire Lords' reign, is also the center of a legend that goes back to the times of Avatar Roku. I'll explain who he is later.", Tenzin adds at the sight of Shay's frown.

»"The Spirit of Peace was crafted by a blacksmith two centuries ago,

from crystal extracted from the Lovers` Cave and by using gold offered by a nobleman of the Earth Kingdom. It was the most beautiful piece of jewelry people had seen and news of it flew from mouth to mouth throughout the news of the existence of the necklace, made of such fine materials, caught the attention of an earthbender, a brutal thief of fierce reputation. Seeking to steal it, he attacked the village where he had last learned of its location single-handedly, looking to steal it and pillage the riches. Avatar Roku had been traveling close to the village and noticed the distress of a passing elder who related the assault on the village.

Â»Avatar Roku put a stop to his travel and headed to the village, where he battled the earthbender and won, expelling him from the Earth Kingdom, under the penalty of being killed if he stepped foot ever again there. In gratitude for his services, the villagers offered him the Spirit of Peace that Roku at first declined. After insisting however, and not to cause a scandal, he accepted it. When he put it on, he was engulfed in a bright light and he mysteriously vanished from sight. For a whole day no one saw him and the searches were fruitless, hence the assumption Roku had been taken to the Spirit World.

Â»The agitation was short lived, however, as at the next dayÂ's dawn he returned, unharmed but looking different. Instead of the Fire NationÂ's attire, he wore a metal armor over a white uniform with a hood, arm bands from where concealed blades were ejected, speaking a foreign language and claiming that it had been five years since he had left. Visibly sad, Roku resumed his journey over the Earth Nation, spending them writing in a journal his reflections over the journey he undertook.

Â»The villagers took that as a sign that he had traveled to the Spirit World through a method different from meditation, and from that day on, it was established that the necklace would pass from Avatar to Avatar as a symbol of status. When Roku died twenty years later, Raava, the spirit that merges with humans to give control over the four elements, was reincarnated in my father, Aang. He was trained to succeed in being the Avatar but fled the Air Benders community when he found out his destiny, not wanting to give up his old life with friends over a nomadic life.

Â»Fire Lord Sozin, that at the time controlled the Fire Nation with an iron hand, feared that the Avatar would stop his rule and invasion plans and ordered the extermination of the Air Benders. My father was the only survivor, having frozen himself below the water, and the Spirit of Peace was taken as a prize.

Â»The necklace never again gave passage to the Spirit World, neither to the Fire Lords, nor to anyone else. My father stopped Fire Lord Sozin`s grandson, Ozai, restored order and balance, and the recovery of the Nations began, which originated the creation of the United Republic of Nations. And on the course of the years, it never activated. On Republic City, sometime after my fatherÂ's passing, a Museum was built and over the many relics that were bought or acquired for exposition, Zuko, the son of Ozai and one of my fatherÂ's best friends, donated the necklace, where it stayed until the theft.

Â»Now we have your story that implies that the necklace activated and crossed dimensions for the first time in so long. You might have

confirmed one of the oldest legends there is, Shay."

Shay opens and closes his mouth at least a dozen times. The many questions that his mind tried to hold on were just too unbelievably ridiculous.

"Do you think the necklace Â´teleportedÂ´ to my world and brought me to Â´your worldÂ´?" Shay decides to start slow. "That sounds loony."

"ItÂ´s a possibility. My father himself told me that on a conversation with Roku, he heard him reference about his adventure on a country called Italy, in a time far more advanced than his own. He claimed to have travelled to 1500 and worked alongside a man named Ezio Auditore along with his secret society of Assassins in overthrowing a powerful tyrant family, leaders of a Templar Order."

Shay does a double take on that.

"Ezio Auditore? You mean, THE Ezio Auditore, Mentor of the Italian Assassins from 1509 to 1512? The man is a legend as great as Altair! I worship the man!", he all but screams with an excited chuckle.

"Yes, thatÂ´s right. So you are from the same world as him but from another time. By the Spirits!", Tenzin gives the map to Shay. "If I may ask you this, could you tell me more about your home world?"

ShayÂ´s grin splits his face in two.

"With pleasure. Will you join us Meelo?" He asks the small boy, who was looking at the two not understanding a thing.

"Yay! Story time!", the little man runs out of the study room.

With that said, the two left the study and returned to the kitchen, Shay already talking about the story of the Brotherhood.

"But wait. How did that Roku fellow return?", Shay interrupts his storytelling.

"No one knows how. Even Roku was clouded with doubts about that subject.", Tenzin says.

Shay gulps and slows down, zooming out of TenzinÂ´s questions.

"_IÂ´m stuck here?_"

2. Chapter 2

**2 months laterâ€|**

Shay is looking at a map of Air Temple Island, lent to him by Tenzin himself earlier at breakfast. He is hell-bent on exploring it and to get back in shape after his recovery. The pain from the fall had long taken a walk and Shay now moved more naturally, allowing him to jog

from the docks to the Temple, but in his opinion he had to get back to his basic training. As he looked intently to the map, he figured that the only good place to practice would be in the small forest overlooking the Airbending Training Area.

Thinking about what he would do already sends anxiety to his heart, and a thin smile covered his face. What Shay really needed was to let go of his surroundings for a few minutes and go to higher ground. Of course he would never do it on the Temple itself, it would be disrespectful to his hosts. Shay folds the map and tucks it in a breast pocket of his red short-sleeved shirt, raises his knees as high as he can, feeling the black fabric of his tracksuit pants and muscles stretching, and goes over a few warm-up exercises, such as push-ups and stretches. Some of the men and women passing by took a few minutes to watch him getting ready before carrying out their duties. Once he begins to feel his muscles ache slightly he rolls his shoulders and cracks his neck with a relieved sigh. Then he breaks into a sprint over to one of the trees, three times higher than him and roots favorable to begin ascension.

"Shay!"

Hearing his name being called, Shay slides to a stop, looking behind to see Meelo running towards him followed closely by his two sisters, all three smiling when they spot him. Shay waves at them with a smile on his face and jogs over to them. Being the one ahead of the others, Meelo reaches his friend first.

"What are you doing?", Meelo asks curiously.

"Well, I was getting ready to do some tree-climbing. About time I got back into shape the way I see it.", Shay answers, stuffing his hands in the pockets of his tracksuit pants.

"Tree-climbing?", a girl with two buns on the sides of the head, dressed in the same uniform as her siblings and father, questions as she hops to the two. "You can climb trees? Where did you learn to do it? Can we see?"

"Don't see why not, Ikki.", he says without much debating. "In fact, I think you can keep up with me in your air thingies?"

"Air scooters!", Meelo yells excitedly.

"That.", Shay nods, the name coming back to his head.

"Is it interesting?", the older sibling, Jinora, asks Shay. Being taller and with only a bun on the right side of her head, she could reach Shay's belly height and not crane her neck until it hurt.

"I like to think so. It helps to take my mind off things.", Shay nods. The anticipation makes a comeback that gets Shay excited again. "Now if you'll excuse me"

Without giving time for the kids to tell him to wait or anything else, Shay spins around and sprints towards the tree he wanted to climb. When he is so close to it one would think he wanted to ram into it, he lifts his right leg and uses it to touch the trunk and leap upwards, using the left leg to launch himself further up and the right hand to grab a protrusion in the bark. From there he uses the

branches spread randomly around the trunk to reach the treetop. When he reaches the highest, seemingly sturdy branch of the tree, Shay searches for the next route and decided to take to the left, to a tree with thick branches that delved deeper into the forest. He casts a look back when he feels wind hitting him in the back and he isn't surprised to see the kids in their Air Scooters fly past him in giggles.

"Catch us if you can!", Ikki shouts at him in challenge.

Shay grins. He jumps to the branch of the next tree and charges after them, determined to win against the brats. He swings, jumps, leaps, goes lower, climbs higher and maneuvers his way through the dark green forest and in a few minutes he had spotted the kids. As soon as they see their adversary they had increase speed, laughing away from him. Shay picks up speed as well and loses focus of everything else that wasn't related to catching up to them. The sweat began to form in his face eventually, later appearing in his armpits and staining his collar, tugging his clothes to his body. Time flies as Shay reaches the kids once more without them noticing it. Doubling his efforts, he manages to get right above them before leaping over them and land in front of them, rolling so he can disperse momentum, stunning the three kids and making them stop.

"I win.", Shay pants as he spins around with arms spread open.

"That was lucky! I'll beat you next time!", Meelo protests with a scowl, waving his arms like a madman.

"I doubt that runt. After all, I make my own luck.", Shay scoofs. Secretly he hopes to do another race against the kids.

"That was cool! Will you show me your moves one day?", Meelo asks.

"And me too?", Jinora joins in, although with a controlled expression and a smile.

"Me three?", Ikki, on the other hand, joins in with puppy eyes.

Shay tilts his head and chuckles humorously.

"We'll see what your father has to say about that. Can't have you lot doing something behind his back now, can I?", Shay says. "How about we race there? Whoever gets in first gets to tell him the news."

"Yeah!", is the unanimous results.

The kids jump on the spot and create Air Scooters to double back the way they came, ignoring the indignant shout of Shay as they sent dirt to him. An incredulous Shay stays still in confusion for a second and covered in dirt before he too sprints after the kids for the second time that day.

"_Should have told them they couldn't use those blasted things!_", he scolds himself inwardly.

"â€| and then we saw a shadow above us and Shay came down like THUM!", Meelo finishes telling his father what happened, dramatically

stomping the floor.

The door to the Temple opens and Shay comes into view, panting tremendously, out-of-breath, sweaty and almost on his knees. He wipes sweat off his forehead (which unfortunately is replaced with more sweat) and tries to speak.

"Soâ€¦ which one ofâ€¦?", that's the most he can bring himself to say.

"I did, Shay!", Ikki exclaims, facing him.

"No, I did!", Meelo interjects, pointing a thumb to his chest.

"Did not!", Ikki denies, facing him instead.

"Yes I did!", Meelo stubbornly exclaims, getting in his sister's face.

"Now, now, kids, there's no need to fight over who got here first.", Tenzin kneels and gently pulls them away from each other. "Your mother is looking for you, she has some interesting news to tell you. She's in the Greenhouse, go on."

The kids look at their father intently and then run out of the Temple to meet their mother, but not before throwing a little tease at Shay for reaching last place. It's just Tenzin and Shay now.

"I see they have made you run a marathon.", Tenzin finally takes the time to examine Shay with a thin amused expression.

"You don't say.", Shay responds with sarcasm. "May I come in?"

"Why, of course. Don't stand there in the wind, come in. I'll get a towel.", Tenzin sends Shay in, leaving afterwards to find something to give Shay.

Shay goes inside, closing the door behind him and sits down by the table, fanning out to create breezes to help him cool down and wiping more sweat from his forehead. That little exercise had proved what he had feared: he was REALLY out of shape and he had to get back in it SOON. The Assassins would have snickered if they could see him now, Chevalier, Hope and Liam more so than the others. Sensing his mind drifting to his former friends, Shay immediately stops imagining them.

He wanted to remember them as less as possible, even if every time he had been on top of the trees he had listened to Kesegowasee's lessons, every time he heard Tenzin giving him lessons of the Air Nomads he recalled Achilles lecturing, or every time he looked at little Meelo he thought of a more carefree Liam. Those were paths he wished to never have to tell anybody. For a brief moment he thought that the whole island was just an imitation of Davenport Manor but then he had to bang his head on the table.

"_Shut up! This is NOT Davenport Manor! This is a peaceful place filled with animals out of a novelist's mind. Get over that fact!_", Shay chastises himself.

To get himself thinking over other things, Shay gets up, aching legs protesting and stands over a window, looking out to the metropolis away from the island. Republic City. It was far, far different from New York. It made him feel homesick for the troubling city. For starters it was as beautiful as the developing metropolis of the Colonies. Then was the fact had it seemed too crowded. Sure, New York was greatly populated by immigrants and naturals, but Republic City could harbor as many citizens as the New World's metropolis, perhaps more, if one would take the size in account. In the daytime the buildings tried to reach the sky, at night it was the bright lights.

Shay had pretty much the basics of the city covered up, like how and when it was founded, who ran the city and what you could find in the city. That had been by far the greatest advantage of befriending Jinora, and telling her stories of deeds in River Valley and the stories he had heard in the taverns. Shay had been introduced to her and the rest of Tenzin's family on the same day he had woken up and stroke friendship with them all. Over the course of that month, Shay particularly grew to enjoy Meelo's company, with his childish innocence, and Ikki's too, with her mind of a stubborn non-stop questioning Assassin novice. The little seven years old girl was far more hyperactive and faster than her siblings, a trait that made her difficult to catch when Shay took the time to play Tag with them.

And he can't forget Pema, the kind-hearted mother of the three and Tenzin's wife, who instilled love and compassion as quick as Shay plunging a Hidden Blade on a soldier's neck (although she was a bit quick to get in a cranky mood recently). In her, Shay would find a more quiet company, a good storyteller and, even if she didn't share his opinion, a counselor. He had found out that she was quite perceptive too, as she had figured out that the constant meals of vegetables had been making Shay hunger for meat (only an idiot wouldn't have noticed him eyeing the lemurs with craving).

The family had done a lot for Shay, aside from nursing him back to health: They had taught him how to understand the basics of writing in their language, how to read it, the money currency, the important bits of history of the Bending Countries, and how to get around the evidently more technologically advanced world. However, he hadn't stepped foot outside the island yet. He was meaning to ask Tenzin to go with him the next time he'd be heading to the city.

He had also met Lin Beifong, the Police Chief of Republic City, when he still wore bandages over his wounds. A week or so after waking up, Lin had arranged the time to travel to the Temple in order to retrieve the Spirit of Peace and take it back to the Museum. She had seemed like a woman whom you should always approach with respect, resembling Hope in a small way. She had iron-colored hair and pale green eyes, double scars in thin lines on her from the right side of the jaw up to her cheek, and wore black metal armor over her uniform to indicate her status as the Chief of Police. He had figured out that she and Tenzin had been friends for a long time given the way they behaved with each other, even if she had been on duty, and he had gotten considerably along with her. Shay had answered her questions as detailed as he could have been, which at first she had been skeptical about. After Tenzin had explained where he had come from, she had been less reluctant to accept the truth (but not by much). Shay inclusively had asked when he could have had his weapons

returned to him, to which Beifong had been downright set in denying him them. It had taken a lot of convincing and a hour and a half for Lin to tell Shay that while his sword and dagger would have had to remain locked-up, she could allow the Hidden Blades to be returned to his possession.

"_But listen closely, Mr. Cormac. If I hear that you have used those blades to harm anyone or if you're arrested for using them in an illegal activity, I will make sure that you will see them again beyond repair. Understood?", _Beifong had warned him. Used to deal with authorities, Shay had obediently nodded.

As far as he could think, he wouldn't use them for anything bad. But because there could come a time when he'd have to protect himself or possibly one of the kids, he wants to have some means of attacking an aggressor, and nothing was more discreet than a pair of Hidden Blades.

"Here."

Shay snaps out of his thoughts and turns around to see Tenzin holding out a white towel. Thanking with a nod, he proceeds to clean his armpits.

"Master Tenzin, while I was doing a little workout the kids asked me if I could teach them how to freerun on the trees.", Shay begins.

"According to the children you have beaten them in a race while navigating through the trees. They were very impressed.", Tenzin stated, showing he already knew of Shay's exercises.

"Aye, they told me that. They asked me to show them how to do it but I told them I had to get your approval.", Shay continued while cleaning his neck. "Do you mind?"

"æ| I'm not sure Shay. Accidents could happen and I don't want to see them injured.", Tenzin shakes his head.

"As you say, Master Tenzin. It's your call.", Shay nods, a bit disappointed deep down. It would have been fun to teach the runts how to maneuver in the trees without using Airbending.

"Shay, I've told you many times, you can call me Tenzin.", The Air Nomad sighed. It was a habit that he understood as one of respect, but he believed that there was no need for that anymore.

"Whatever you say, Master Tenzin.", Shay grinned. He also understood his host saw the treatment as one of respect and that they got along well enough to be informal with each other. But as long as Shay would be staying under his roof, he'd treat him formally. End of story.

Tenzin gives up with another sigh and instead sits down. Shay does the same.

"I've stopped by the Police Headquarters today and you will be happy to know that I've managed to retrieve your Hidden Blades. Lin was still reluctant to entrust them to you, so allow me to remind you of your promise to her.", Tenzin informs, retrieving two bracers from

behind his back.

Shay drops the towel and, keeping the relief inside him, he takes them in his hands, looking briefly at his old companions, and puts them on. The slight addiction of weight is welcomed and Shay extends and retracts the concealed blades to hear them working. They were still sharp and there was no damage in them.

"Thank you sir.", Shay smiles despite his control. "I owe you big time."

"No Shay, you do not. You are a guest to us and we are more than welcome to accept you.", Tenzin dismisses the gratitude. They were Air Nomads and Air Nomads always help those in need. And even if they weren't, they'd still aid him.

"That may be sir but you saved my life. Gave a second chance.", Shay's smile dies and he looks away to concentrate on a pillar. Where would he be if he hadn't been saved by the monk family?

"I do believe that there is also the Spirit of Peace to be thanked. After all, you finding it was what brought you to us.", Tenzin declared, attempting to lighten up the mood.

"More like the other way 'round actually.", Shay looks at Tenzin again. But if it wasn't for the necklace he would have been captured again or left frozen in the waters. "Where is that necklace now?"

"In Aang Memorial Island, back where it should have been to begin with.", Tenzin told him, having heard the report directly from Lin.

"And you are not worried some other genius can steal it again?", Shay questions. It was stolen once and that proved it could be done again.

"Relax Shay. The museum has hired more security guards and increased security measures. There isn't a remote chance of anyone succeeding ever again.", Tenzin reassures the Irishman.

Somehow Shay believes that it would be possible. He had done his fair share of looting to know that even highly secured establishments could be broken into more than twice, all it took was blueprints, expertise and planning. Sometimes over the last two months he felt glad he had learned something from the Assassins.

"Oh spirits, how could I forget!", Tenzin exclaims, breaking Shay's inner thinking. "I haven't told you the big news. Pema is pregnant! We have a new baby coming!"

"Congratulations Master Tenzin.", Shay's surprised expression dissolves to form a happy face. He gets up, goes around the table and pats the man in the back. "Any idea if it will be a boy or a girl?"

"No, Pema has told me she's pregnant of only a month. But whatever the case, he or she will be welcomed into our family with open arms. I hope it is another Airbender.", Tenzin confides with Shay. If Shay looked closely enough he could see his eyes shining.

Shay laughs at the man's expectations but in his mind he questions if it would be healthy for Pema to have another Airbender. Three kids were troublesome enough as he had already witnessed, but children who could send strong bursts of wind at you must be even more complicated. And Pema could lose her temper under too much pressure.

"Do the kids know already?"

"That was why I sent them to their mother. They must be thrilled as we speak.", Tenzin says.

As if a magnet had attracted them back to the Temple, the doors open and the kids, accompanied by Pema, enter the room and go to their father to bombard him with questions. Shay leaps away just in time to avoid an out-of-balance Tenzin to fall over his feet with the runts on top of him and goes over to Pema.

"So, ready for the challenge?", Shay asks.

"Yes. I do hope that it will be a Non-Bender.", Pema says happily, rubbing her belly.

And Shay laughs loudly at the last sentence. Who would have thought that he could understand a fellow Non-Bender so easily?

The following day, after lunch with Airbending family and the Air Acolytes, Shay rests in his quarters in the men's dormitories with two books open on his lap and a pencil twirling in his right hand.

Shay whistles at the sound of a jazz tune playing on the radio in the desk next to the bed where he sits. To him, aside from showers, the so-called Satomobiles and the telephones, it was one of the best technological advances that world had to offer. Why bother going to a tavern to hear the same array of songs when you could stay in your room and listen as the bands played this more upbeat type of musics? He recalls how he had been so fascinated when he had first seen the wooden box with two metal buttons that made a man start singing. Pema had told him to take it to his room and enjoy as long as he wanted. Half a day later and the family had found him still listening to the radio, whistling at the sound of When The Girl Met The Badgermole. Right now there was another song being broadcasted, Beautiful Love, and Shay is nearly distracted from his hobby because of it.

He had offered to record his experiences and history of his world in a book with hard cover and a Chinese letter for a word he would have to ask someone about. Shay hasn't even filled the first ten pages, merely since he had no interest in completing that task so early. And there are numerous things to talk about. How could he even write about the First Civilization if he didn't know much about the Precursor race? All he had ever learned was that they had been there on Earth before, Adam and Eve were connected somehow, and that they had simply vanished. It wasn't much. And then write about the whole history of the conflict of Assassins and Templars was something not even he knew in full detail. Perhaps he could write about another subject.

"Sailing", a part of Shay's mind whispers.

Yeah, that could do!

Blocking out the news broadcaster that interrupted the song to bring a news update on some small scale battle between the Triads and the Police, Shay spends the time scribbling dozens and dozens of notes about sailing techniques, types of ships from the Schooner to the Leviathan, naval charts meticulously hand-drawn and a simplified drawing and description of _The Morrigan_. He feels his eyes getting somewhat watery. He wouldn't miss the Assassins, but he'd sure miss his precious _Morrigan_: the rough feeling of her helm in his hands, the way the sails curved when the wind was in their favor, the sound of her cannons when they fired and the cheers of the crew when they were used.

That reminds him: What would he do from there on? Stranded in a world that was scientifically more evolved and different than his own, he felt like he should travel around the parallel Earth, just like... _Stop_. But how to do that? Perhaps he could join the navy. He had seen the boats arrive and depart from the docks, massive and completely made of iron, capable of overpowering the Royal Navy in a few minutes. Very different from the ones he is used to know intimately. But he could adapt to that by studying beforehand and then joining the navy. It would take a few months worth of memorizing, and he's never been the guy who closes in his study to devour books (to his credit, he reads a novel once in a while), but in the long run it would compensate.

Storing the idea in the back of his mind, Shay closes the book for now and shuts off the radio. Raising and yawning, he walks out of his room and leaves the Men's Dormitory to go outside. The sun shines brightly in the sky, casting the buildings' shadows over him, so Shay can't complain about the heat as he notices Tenzin and the kids by a strange contraption composed of gates with the symbols of the Air Element. The gates were spinning at high speeds and the kids apparently are going to have to cross them.

"_Is that even possible?_", Shay wonders to himself. "_C'mon Shay, you're living with monks skilled in commanding the air. Of course they can do it._", another voice answers his question.

Silently he agrees with the logic and walks to the family, bit by bit picking up bits of the conversation the three are having.

"_training._", Tenzin says to Meelo, impatience twisted in his face.

"_the same_ daddy. Can we go_", Meelo asks the elder Nomad.

"No. And it's because it's the same that you will be able to make it without even trying. Now, just like we practiced.", Tenzin asks his son before turning to the gates.

Shay walks faster to be able to see the demonstration better. He catches Tenzin taking three steps forward before assuming a stance and disappearing inside the gates. From there he has difficulty keeping an eye on Tenzin, whose yellow and red form keeps traveling through the non-stop spinning old gates with obvious ease and

mastery. Never stopping spinning with the flow of the gates, changing directions when necessary, he exits the gates from the opposite side with a roll and resuming the initial stance.

"_IÂ'll be damned_.", ShayÂ's amazed by the technique of the elder Nomad. "How in GodÂ's name did you do that?"

Tenzin turns at the new voice and adjusts his cape.

"As a child I had weeks of training with my father. The rotating gates have been used by Airbenders since ageless times to teach pupils the fundamental principles of Airbending: To be the leaf that flows with the wind without need to force its way through.", Tenzin explains. To emphasize the point, he takes a leaf on the ground and using a small gust of wind, he throws it at the still-spinning gates. The leaf vanishes and reappears on the right, untouched.

"Blimey. That could have come in handy.", Shay muses. Countless times had he been faced with opponents or infrastructures that had delayed him. Had he knownâ€| waitâ€|

"Wanna try Shay?", Ikki asks the distracted man, after sneaking up on Shay and jumping to his back.

"Ikki, Shay canÂ't use the gates yet.", Jinora butts in, having come closer to the three. "Shay has to learn the stance and the basic moves of an Airbender before trying."

"I can do that?", Shay asks the girl. He thought that only Airbenders had the privilege of doing that. He starts seeing himself doing those movements and applying them in tricky situations. So helpful!

"Anyone can. The Air Acolytes arenÂ't Airbenders as well, but they carry on their teachings, culture and teachings. You can join them if you wish.", Tenzin explains, pointing to a member far away from them by the Temple.

Shay looks at said member walking from the MenÂ's Dormitory to the Temple, muttering to himself. The shaved man in yellow robes with a red sash notices the four looking at him and waves with a gentle smile before entering the Temple. Shay ponders on the opportunity andâ€|

"Any chance I can learn without having to join them?", he asks the four.

The family looks at him in disbelief and stunned silence. They exchange surprised looks before Tenzin calmly explains, "To know the Air Nomads ways without actually being an Acolyte is unheard of and if word gets out that you are one such case, the whole meaning of an Air Acolyte will be questioned. IÂ'm afraid you either become an member or we cannot teach you."

"Ah I see.", itÂ's all Shay can say. The monkÂ's way of life wasnÂ't appealing to him (vegetables for eternity, shaving head *shivers*) and he already had the idea of joining the navy. "Then IÂ'll have to decline."

"ThatÂ's alright. ItÂ's your call.", Tenzin tells him. Shay gets the

feeling he had used the same words he had used the previous day on purpose. "Now kids, I want you to get to work. Let's go."

The kids get to work one by one by lining up and taking a turn each. Shay decides to walk away with Tenzin.

"It's a shame really. I believe you could have been a good Air Acolyte.", his companion comments, stroking his pointy beard.

"Being a monk isn't my call, Master Tenzin.", Shay confesses. He stuffs his hands in the pockets of his pants before remembering something. "Master Tenzin, I was thinking about going to Republic City sometime soon, to get to know it and explore it. And I was wondering if I couldn't come with you the next time you go there."

Tenzin stops to look at Shay. "I must warn you Shay, I go to the city mainly to attend to my Councilman duties. We might not have much time to stroll about."

"Does it still mean I can go with you? If it isn't a bother, of course?", Shay rapidly adds. He hated to impose himself as a priority.

"No, do not worry. Well, with any luck, in two days time I can show you around.", Tenzin assures.

To this Shay chuckles. "One thing you should know about me, Master Tenzin: I make my own luck.", he tells the man with a humored tone.

Tenzin blinks as Shay's motto goes over his ears. "if you believe so, I won't stop you."

"Then it's a deal.", Shay smiles, sticking out a hand to shake.

"It is.", Tenzin smiles softly and shakes the hand.

â€|

â€|_?_

"_What's happening?"_

In a black void with no sign of life, Shay seemingly floats with no clue as to where he is.

"_**You wished to see me?**_"_

Shay looks behind his shoulder to see no one.

"_Show yourself.", he demands as he flicks his wrist. But there's no sound of metal and Shay checks to see the Hidden Blades weren't strapped to his wrists._

"_**I'm here.**_"_, the voice, neither male nor female, but rather dark, indicates._

Shay looks around, yet he still sees no one.

"_**Oh, do forgive me. I tend to forget that the only reason why Roku could see was because he was the Avatar.**__", the voice says apologetically. "__**Would you kindly close your eyes?**__"__

"_And why should I do what you say?", Shay asks suspiciously.__

"_**You are dreaming. What harm could I possibly do in a dream?**__", the voice tells him.__

_Wait. That's right. He remembers going to bed. Should he trust his own dreams however? He decides to. He closes his eyes and his eyes seemed to gain some weight of their own.__

"_**And done! Open them.**__", the voice chirps.__

_Shay does so quickly to be able to see what that was all about. And he's shocked to find himself hovering inside his quarters inside the Morrigan. They are just as he had left them prior to his journey to Lisbon, untidy and with a single bed laid by his right, yet it's colored a grayish-blue on the contrary to the dark. A lantern set on the floor gives out a white light.__

"_I must be getting homesick. Aye, must be.", Shay wonders.__

_He takes a step only to find that he can't.__

"_Right, hovering.", Shay sighs.__

"_**Use the power of your mind.**__", the ownerless voice, less distorted, advises.__

_Shay raises an eyebrow in confusion but tries anyway. He thinks of himself moving and he manages to hover forward. He reaches the door and opens it, which results in being blinded by strong light.__

"_**Shame. Seems like we don't have much time. Well, visit me whenever you want to, Non-Bender, and make good use of your gift.**__", the voice states with a hint of sadness.
"__**Farewell**__."__

* * *

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End
file.